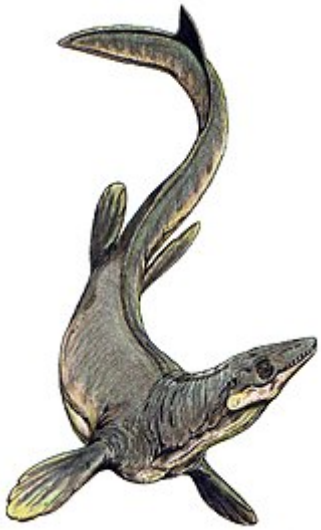
Plioplatecarpus

Plioplatecarpus is a genus of mosasaur lizard. Like all mosasaurs, it lived in the late Cretaceous period, about 73-68 million years ago.

Contents

Description
Discovery
Distribution
References

Description



Artist's reconstruction

The eyes of *Plioplatecarpus* are proportionally larger than those of many mosasaur genera, although the skull is relatively short. The larger eyes may be an adaptation to low light conditions like those found in deeper water. It has fewer teeth than most mosasaurs, but they are greatly recurved. This suggests that *Plioplatecarpus* would have hunted relatively small prey that it could grab very precisely. The broad distribution of fossil remains in both North America and Europe suggest that it would have been an open ocean predator.

Discovery

Plioplatecarpus was first found in Europe by paleontologist Louis Dollo (*P. marshi*), in 1882. It was relatively incomplete, but more fossils would soon turn up. In North America, Edward Drinker Cope found another mosasaur in 1869, but had identified it as *Mosasaurus*. It would later be reclassified as *Plioplatecarpus*, as would Cope's *Liodon*, in 1870. *Liodon* would be reclassified as *Platecarpus*, and later as *Prognathodon*. However, some have placed it in the genus *Plioplatecarpus*.[1][2]

Plioplatecarpus	
Temporal range: Late Cretaceous	
P. primaevus skull	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Sauropsida
Order:	Squamata
Family:	Mosasauridae
Subfamily:	Plioplatecarpinae
Genus:	***Plioplatecarpus***
Species	
▪ †***P. marshi*** Dollo, 1882 (type) ▪ †***P. depressus*** (Cope, 1869) ▪ †***P. primaevus*** Russell, 1967 ▪ †***P. houzeaui*** (Dollo, 1889) ▪ †***P. peckensis*** Cuthbertson and Holmes, 2015	
Synonyms	
▪ *Oterognathus* Dollo, 1889	

Distribution

Plioplatecarpus mounted skull in the Rocky Mountain Dinosaur Resource Center in Woodland Park, Colorado

Plioplatecarpus has been found in many locations around the world (most mosasaurs were fairly widespread). *Plioplatecarpus* has been found in the Pierre Shale of Kansas, Demopolis Chalk of Alabama, and also in Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, Canada, Sweden, The Netherlands.

References

1. Oceansofkansas.com (http://www.oceansofkansas.com/Prognath.html)
2. Paleodb.org (http://paleodb.org/cgi-bin/bridge.pl?a=checkTaxonInfo&taxon_no=36408&is_real_user=1)

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